

San Antonio, Texas – [Today, the Department of Justice \(DOJ\) blocked a Texas Voter ID law](#) passed by the Texas State Legislature and signed into law by Governor Rick Perry last year from taking effect because the state failed to show that the law did not have a discriminatory purpose or effect on minority voters. With 81 out of 254 Texas counties lacking an ID facility, the DOJ also cited the extreme difficulty for Texans in rural areas to obtain the necessary identification. Congressman Charlie Gonzalez, a long-time critic of the Texas law and other voter suppression laws, issued the following statement regarding the Texas Voter ID law and the DOJ's decision:

“The Department of Justice made the correct decision in denying the Texas Legislature and Governor Perry in their attempt to enact a law that would disenfranchise registered voters, particularly the young, the disabled, and minorities. Voter suppression tactics like these are the weapons of the War on Voting. Our right to vote is enshrined in the Constitution and the Department of Justice is right to defend it this way. Attorneys at DOJ collected broad evidence that this law would have a disparate impact on minority voters. The Department gave Texas multiple chances to disprove this and the state failed to do so.

“President Bush spent five years and millions of dollars and couldn't find evidence of voter fraud to justify laws like this. In 2006 Texas Attorney General Abbott was unable to name a single case of fraud that would have been stopped by a voter ID. The Republican legislators behind Pennsylvania's new voter ID law were equally unable to cite a single case. That's because voter ID laws attempt to solve a problem that does not exist. But they create a very real problem, threatening the voting rights of millions of Americans, hundreds of thousands of Texans, and tens of thousands of San Antonians.

“The 14<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup>, and 26<sup>th</sup> Amendments to the Constitution all protect our right to vote. But even after today's announcement, that right is still under attack and the War on Voting continues. Texas has sued the United States to gain permission to put this law into effect. Since the 2010 elections, states across the country have introduced and adopted laws making it harder for people to vote. Our rights are under attack and we must all work together to defend them.

“The right to vote is just that: a right. It must be protected.”